



MIDDLE & UPPER SACRAMENTO RIVER MITIGATION CREDIT AGREEMENTS

SUPPORTING WORKING LANDS & SPECIES

Photo by Daniel Nylén

A Framework to Benefit Species & Facilitate Permitting

The new California Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) program aims to coordinate regional conservation priorities, with an eye towards streamlining permitting for important infrastructure projects (like flood control) and conserving important natural resources. These voluntary RCIS plans identify regional habitat needs and recovery goals, and create the umbrella for developing Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCAs). MCAs establish the terms under which conservation projects that measurably support the RCIS conservation goals can be used to create mitigation credits that can fulfill permitting requirements for projects that impact natural resources. MCAs allow for the creation of mitigation in advance of impacts, as well as the ability to use, sell or transfer credits.

These agreements define

- 1) The quality and quantity of habitat protected,
- 2) The methods to quantify habitat improvements, and
- 3) The financial and legal requirements needed to ensure long-term conservation success.

Once approved by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, MCA credits can be used by infrastructure agencies, other developers, and conservation investors to satisfy California Endangered Species Act permitting requirements and support the RCIS conservation goals.

Sacramento River MCAs

Environmental Incentives and Environmental Defense Fund are developing the first MCA with partners in the Middle and Upper Sacramento River RCIS region.

Goals and Process

This first MCA will conserve the rich agricultural and ecological resources of the Sacramento River Valley, and support the ability of flood control agencies to implement critical flood safety projects.

The MCA projects will create and protect habitat for focal species on working farms and ranches. The outcomes of the restoration projects will be carefully monitored and tracked, and, once habitat reaches defined performance milestones and quality standards, credits may be released by CDFW.

Anticipated Timeline

FALL 2017	—	Habitat testing & development of credit projects
WINTER 2018	—	Development of Draft MCA Framework
SPRING 2018	—	Development of Credit Project Prospectuses
SUMMER 2018	—	Submit MCA Framework to CDFW for Review
	—	Submit final Credit Project Proposals to CDFW for Review

Focal Species



Swainson's hawks can forage for rodents and other prey in alfalfa fields, and nest in large trees on farms.



Giant garter snakes use irrigation canals as habitat and as movement corridors between wetlands and wetted rice fields.

Pilot Projects

Our team is working closely with several landowners in our RCIS region to evaluate the habitat potential of their land and to design habitat projects. We intend to enroll three of these projects under our first MCA for credit approval from CDFW, paving the way for greater adoption of the MCA framework in this region and beyond. If you might be interested in enrolling your property for crediting under the MCA, please contact Dan Kaiser or Katie Riley (below) for more information.



Dan Kaiser

Senior Manager, California Habitat Markets
dkaiser@edf.org
(415) 293-6066

Katie Riley

Senior Associate, Wildlife & Land
kriley@enviroincentives.com
(530) 541-2980